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09/742,458	12/19/2000	Christopher L. Wong	021756-019600US	8837
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TOWNSEND AND TOWNSEND AND CREW LLP TWO EMBARCADERO CENTER 8TH FLOOR SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94111-3834			TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3623	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on June 30, 2006 has been entered.

Claims 1-18, 23-24, 28-29, 31-32, 34 and 37-40 have been canceled. Claims 19, 25-27, 30 and 35 been amended. Claims 41-70 have been newly added. Claims 19-22, 25-27, 30, 33, 35-36 and 41-70 are now pending in this application.

Response to Amendment

2. Applicant's amendments to claims 19, 25-27, 30 and 35 and the addition of claims 41-70 are acknowledged.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments are moot in view of the new grounds of rejections.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 19-22, 25-27, 30, 33, 35-36 and 41-70 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Joao (U.S. 6,662,194) and Knudson et al. (U.S. 5,765,140).

As per claim 19, Joao discloses a system for workforce procurement and management using a hosted network application, comprising:

a plurality of web servers for hosting a workforce procurement and management application (col. 3, lines 60-67; col. 12, lines 9-19 and 27-31; Figure 1);

at least one database server (col. 4, lines 8-12; Figure 2);

at least one database for storing a plurality of data including the workforce procurement and management application, wherein the workforce procurement and management application includes a plurality of modules accessible at varying levels to different participants in a hosted workforce procurement and management process (col. 4, lines 8-12; col. 5, lines 53-64; col. 14, lines 28-45; col. 15, lines 47-62; The system contains a database for maintaining contractor and employer information. Access to the information maintained in the database is limited by authorization.), the modules comprising:

a skills fulfillment module comprising,

a requirement function for specifying a staffing requirement for a project (col. 25, lines 25-31; Employers use the system to enter project requirements including hiring requirements.); and

a settlement function for tracking expenditures on the project (col. 34, lines 33-46; The system maintains financial accounts for tracking payments (i.e., expenses) to individuals for work performed on projects.);

an exchange module comprising a search function for matching a digital portfolio of a contractor to the staffing requirement for the project, wherein the contractor is hired for the project (col. 20, lines 53-63; Hiring entities use the system to search for contractors to fill positions for projects.); and

a knowledge management module comprising a reporting function and an analysis function (col. 22, lines 42-53; col. 25, line 66-col. 26, line 10; The system provides reports to both, contractors seeking jobs, as well as employers seeking contractors.).

Joao does not expressly disclose a resource management module comprising a work journal function for collecting information about work performed on the project by the hired contractor. Knudson et al. discloses a resource management module comprising a work journal function for collecting information about work performed on the project by the hired contractor (col. 6, lines 10-14, 48-51 and 62-67; An assignments table is used to maintain assigned tasks for users including the description of the task and the identity of the user responsible for completing the task. Additionally, users update the assignments table through their timesheets, in which they enter the

expended time for each of their assigned tasks.). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art for the system of Joao to utilize a work journal function as disclosed in Knudson et al. because the information maintained in the work journal function would provide employers with additional criteria with which to search for/filter through potential contractors, where the additional criteria provides employers with information relating to the contractors work experience and skills, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the search feature provided to employers seeking contractors for project assignments.

As per claim 20, Joao discloses the system of claim 19, wherein the exchange module further comprises:

a sourcing function for specifying sourcing preference and rules for a project and a transaction management function for managing a hiring process including sourcing, interviewing, and negotiation (col. 24, lines 37-49; col. 25, lines 24-30; col. 39, line 61-col. 40, line 3; Employers indicate their requirements for projects as well as the hiring process.).

As per claim 21, Joao discloses the system of claim 19, wherein the skills fulfillment module further comprises:

a request for proposal (RFP) function for entering an RFP (col. 24, lines 37-49; col. 32, lines 30-38; The system allows contractors and employers to submit offers and counteroffers to each other as well as have bidding for projects.);

a work order function for documenting terms and conditions of a project and a purchase order function for generating a purchase order in response to an approved

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work order (col. 33, line 53-col. 34, line 11; The system maintains project-specific information such as project requirements, hirings and schedules. The system also maintains financial information associated with payment of contractors for work on a project. Thus, a work order can include a requirement to hire a contractor and the purchase order can include the offering of a job to a contractor.);

a logistics management function for facilitating the logistical components of a hiring process including management of blood testing, badging, and facilities (col. 24, lines 34-49; The system allows for the management of employee screening and hiring processes.);

a fulfillment management function for managing the fulfillment of sourcing requirements, including maintaining a status of sourcing requirements (col. 24, lines 37-49; col. 25, lines 24-30; col. 39, lines 33-39; col. 39, line 61-col. 40, line 3; Employers indicate their requirements for projects as well as the hiring process. The system maintains status information as to whether a deal has been reached between a contractor and an employer.);

a risk management function for facilitating the pre-qualification of a contractor and a consultant and for monitoring compliance with government rules and regulations (col. 24, lines 34-49; col. 25, lines 25-31; col. 40, lines 59-65; Employers enter requirements of contractors for certain projects. Potential contractors are screened to ensure they meet those requirements before they are hired.).

As per claim 22, Joao discloses the system of claim 19, wherein the resource management module further comprises tracking expenses (col. 34, lines 33-46; The

system maintains financial accounts for tracking payments (i.e., expenses) to individuals for work performed on projects.). Joao also discloses creating reports on contractor and employer data, which is stored in the database(s) (col. 22, lines 42-53; col. 25, line 66-col. 26, line 10; The system provides reports to both, contractors seeking jobs, as well as employers seeking contractors.). However, Joao does not expressly disclose an expense reporting function. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art for the system of Joao to report on the expenses that are tracked in the database(s) since Joao already has the ability to report on data stored in the database(s), and further, an expense report would enable employers to easily and efficiently view expense data for each project, thus enhancing the overall management of projects.

As per claim 25, Joao discloses the system of claim 19, wherein the staffing requirement includes a list of staffing suppliers, and a list of skills, and wherein the staffing requirement is generated by the analysis function (col. 25, lines 25-31; col. 25, line 66-col. 26, line 10; The system provides reports to employers seeking contractors based on the employers' staffing requirements, including skills.).

As per claim 26, Joao discloses the method and system of claim 19, wherein the different participants include a contractor who is an individual contingent worker, a client who is an employee of an enterprise, a recruiter who sells a service of finding contingent workers, and a staffing supplier who sells a service of finding contingent workers, including finding multiple contingent workers to staff a project (col. 11, lines 45-67), wherein the different participants have varying levels of access to the hosted

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network application based upon attributes, wherein attributes include personal attributes associated with a participant, and enterprise attributes associated with an enterprise using the hosted network application (col. 15, lines 1-22; The database contains personal information about the users of the system. Access to the information may be restricted to certain users.).

As per claim 27, Joao does not expressly disclose the system of claim 19, wherein the work journal function comprises: receiving data into a work journal data entity, wherein the entered data comprises, hours worked by the hired contractor, type of work done by the hired contractor and comments regarding work done by the hired contractor; and receiving an approval of the work journal data entity. Knudson et al. discloses the work journal function comprises: receiving data into a work journal data entity, wherein the entered data comprises, hours worked by the hired contractor, type of work done by the hired contractor and comments regarding work done by the hired contractor; and receiving an approval of the work journal data entity (col. 6, lines 48-51 and 62-67; col. 7, lines 18-25; Users enter the expended time for each of their assigned tasks as well as comments. Approving managers approve the time sheet data entered by the users.). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art for the system of Joao to have a contractor essentially use a time sheet that tracks hours worked and type of work done and have the time sheet data approved as disclosed by Knudson et al. because doing so ensures that contractors are working the hours they say they are working, which helps to keep an accurate schedule of work performed, which, in turn, assists employers in their search for contractors, as in

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the system of Joao, employers use contractors' schedules and experience information as search criteria to match potential contractors with particular projects.

As per claim 30, Joao discloses the system of claim 21, wherein the work order function comprises;

generating a work order based upon a successful search for a contractor, reviewing the work order at least one level in order to determine whether to approve the work order, if the work order is not approved, returning the work order to a level below the level at which it was not approved and collecting data regarding the work order, approval, and failure to approve in the database, wherein the knowledge management module accesses the collected data (col. 16, lines 33-50; The database contains information about the contractors who have been approved in advance to work for a specific employer as well as information about the contractors who have not been approved in advance to work for a specific employer.).

As per claim 33, Joao discloses the system of claim 21, wherein the request for proposal function comprises receiving a request for proposal including a list of required contingent workers and their associated skills, linking the request for proposal with a project specification that includes data regarding a project to be staffed, generating a search based upon the request for proposal and the project specification, wherein the search uses the exchange module, broadcasting at least part of the request for proposal to publicly accessible applications, receiving responses to the request for proposal, conducting bargaining based upon responses to the request for proposal including auctions and reverse auctions (col. 24, lines 37-49; col. 32, lines 30-38 and 47-65; The

system allows contractors and employers to submit offers and counteroffers to each other as well as conduct bidding and auctioning on projects. The bidding and auctioning can occur via email.).

As per claim 35, Joao discloses the system of claim 19, wherein the analysis function comprises:

automatically performing an analysis of at least one report based upon criteria selected by a participant and receiving a change of at least one attribute based upon a review of the analysis by the participant (col. 22, lines 42-53; col. 25, line 66-col. 26, line 10; The system provides reports to both, contractors seeking jobs, as well as employers seeking contractors. Contractors and employers can update/revise their searches to achieve different results.).

As per claim 36, Joao discloses the system of claim 19, wherein the hosted network application is hosted on the Internet (col. 13, lines 23-34).

As per claim 58, Joao does not expressly disclose the system of claim 19, wherein the work journal function further comprises a work journal approval function that receives a review of the work performed by the hired contractor. Knudson et al. discloses the work journal approval function receiving a review of the work performed by the hired contractor (col. 7, lines 18-25). At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art for the system of Joao to have a work journal approval function that receives a review of the work performed by the hired contractor because doing so would provide employers with contractors' performance information, thereby enabling employers to make more informed decisions with more

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criteria when they search for potential contractors for project work as previous work performance is a common criteria used when making hiring decisions.

As per claim 59, Joao discloses the system of claim 19, wherein the search function comprises: performing a search for a contingent position based upon criteria entered by a contractor, wherein the contingent position is associated with a project (col. 11, lines 45-67; col. 20, lines 53-63; col. 24, lines 37-49; col. 32, lines 30-38 and 47-51; Contractors search for contingent positions, in that the positions are conditional upon meeting the hiring requirements of the employer seeking to hire a contractor for a particular project.).

As per claim 61, Joao discloses the system of claim 19, further comprising a digital portfolio function including:

populating a first of a plurality of digital portfolios, each for a different contractor, with data extracted from an electronic resume and populating a second of the plurality of digital portfolios with data from systems external to the hosted network application (col. 22, lines 13-20; col. 23, lines 44-52; Digital portfolios for each contractor are populated from resume data as well as from answers submitted via a questionnaire by the contractor (i.e., external to the application). Contractors may also upload additional data such as transcripts and work samples, not part of a resume (i.e., external to the application).

Claims 41-57, 60 and 62-70 recite substantially similar subject matter as claims 19-22, 25-27, 30, 33, 35-36, 58-59 and 61 above. Therefore, claims 41-57, 60 and 62-70 are rejected on the same basis as claims 19-22, 25-27, 30, 33, 35-36, 58-59 and 61 above.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Casto (U.S. 6,038,547) discusses a construction project tracking and payment system;
- Donnelly et al. (U.S. 6,049,776) discusses a human resource management system for staffing projects.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to C. Michelle Tarae (formerly, C. Michelle Colon) whose telephone number is 571-272-6727. The examiner can normally be reached Monday – Friday from 8:30am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz, can be reached at 571-272-6729.

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C. Michelle Tarae
Patent Examiner
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September 12, 2006